

CLAIMS

1. A computerized method of routing between network servers coupled to a data communication network, said method comprising:

storing information in a central database for identifying locations of a plurality of network servers that provide at least one service via the data communication network,
5 said central database being coupled to a central server, said central server being coupled to the data communication network;

receiving a request from the user for a selected service to be provided by one of the network servers, said request being received at the central server and including a carry through keyword for controlling routing of the user to the selected service;

10 retrieving location information from the central database to identify the location of the network server providing the selected service;

attaching the carry through keyword to the retrieved location information; and
routing the user to the network server providing the selected service, said user being directed to the selected service based on the carry through keyword.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising storing authentication information in the central database for authenticating the user.

3. The method of claim 2 further comprising receiving a request at the central server to authenticate the user when the user requests the selected service and authenticating the user by determining whether the user was already authenticated and, if

the user was not already authenticated, then retrieving login information from the user for

5 comparison to authentication information stored in the central database.

4. The method of claim 3 wherein the user is routed to the network server
providing the selected service after the user is authenticated by the central server.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the carry through keyword references content
associated with the selected service provided by the network server.

6. The method of claim 1 further comprising storing user-specific information in
the central database for identifying the user and wherein the carry through keyword is
based on the user-specific information.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein the user-specific information includes user and
domain names for the user.

8. The method of claim 1 further comprising identifying the selected service with
a service routing request keyword included in the service request received at the central
server.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein at least one of the network servers is a portal
for providing the user with a gateway to the services provided by the network servers,

and further comprising routing the user from the portal to the central server with the carry through keyword for controlling routing of the user and with the service routing request

5 keyword for identifying the selected service when the user requests the selected service.

10. The method of claim 8 further comprising transferring additional data with the retrieved location information as a function of the service routing request keyword.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein the additional data includes an alternative user name of the user.

12. The method of claim 1 further comprising identifying the user with a domain name and wherein the location information is retrieved from the central database as a function of the domain name for the user.

13. The method of claim 12 further comprising identifying a plurality of providers of the selected service, permitting the user to select one of the identified plurality of providers for receiving the selected service, and routing the user to the network server of the selected one of the identified plurality of providers of the selected
5 service.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein the identified plurality of providers of the selected service are based on the domain name for the user.

15. The method of claim 13 further comprising storing a user profile in the central database, said user profile including user preference information with respect to the identified plurality of providers of the selected service.

16. The method of claim 1 further comprising identifying a plurality of providers of the selected service with a service routing request keyword included in the service request received at the central server.

17. The method of claim 1 wherein storing information in the central database for identifying the locations of the network servers includes registering the network servers with the central server.

18. The method of claim 1 further comprising operating a browser program configured to permit the user to communicate on the data communication network.

19. The method of claim 1 wherein the network servers are web servers and the data communication network is the Internet.

20. The method of claim 1 wherein the method is performed by the central server.

21. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 1.

22. A computerized system for routing between network servers coupled to a data communication network, said system comprising:

a central server coupled to the data communication network;

a central database storing information for identifying locations of a plurality of network servers that provide at least one service via the data communications network, said central database being coupled to a central server; and

said central server receiving a request from the user for a selected service to be provided by one of the network servers, said request including a carry through keyword for controlling routing of the user to the selected service;

said central server retrieving location information from the central database to identify the location of the network server providing the selected service and attaching the carry through keyword to the retrieved location information; and

said central server routing the user with the carry through keyword to the network server providing the selected service, said user being directed to the selected service based on the carry through keyword.

23. The system of claim 22 wherein the central database further stores authentication information in the central database for authenticating the user.

24. The system of claim 23 wherein the central server comprises an authentication server receiving a request to authenticate the user when the user requests the selected service and authenticating the user by determining whether the user was already authenticated and, if the user was not already authenticated, then retrieving login
5 information from the user for comparison to authentication information stored in the central database.

25. The system of claim 24 wherein the user is routed to the network server providing the selected service after the user is authenticated by the authentication server.

26. The system of claim 22 wherein the carry through keyword references content associated with the selected service provided by the network server.

27. The system of claim 22 wherein the central database further stores user-specific information for identifying the user and wherein the carry through keyword is based on the user-specific information.

28. The system of claim 27 wherein the user-specific information includes user and domain names for the user.

29. The system of claim 22 wherein the selected service is identified by a service routing request keyword included in the service request received at the central server.

30. The system of claim 29 wherein at least one of the network servers is a portal for providing the user with a gateway to the services provided by the network servers and wherein the user is routed from the portal to the central server with the carry through keyword for controlling routing of the user and with the service routing request keyword
5 for identifying the selected service when the user requests the selected service.

31. The system of claim 29 wherein additional data is transferred with the retrieved location information to the network server providing the selected service as a function of the service routing request keyword.

32. The system of claim 31 wherein the additional data includes an alternative user name of the user.

33. The system of claim 22 wherein the user is identified by a domain name and wherein the location information is retrieved from the central database as a function of the domain name for the user.

34. The system of claim 33 wherein a plurality of the network servers provide the selected service and the user is permitted to select one of the network servers for receiving the selected service and wherein the central server routes the user to the selected network server.

35. The system of claim 34 wherein the plurality of network servers providing the selected service is based on the domain name for the user.

36. The system of claim 34 wherein the central database further stores a user profile, said user profile including user preference information with respect to the plurality of network servers providing the selected service.

37. The system of claim 22 wherein a service routing request keyword included in the service request received at the central server identifies a plurality of the network servers providing the selected service.

38. The system of claim 22 wherein the network servers are web servers and the data communication network is the Internet.

39. A computer readable medium having stored thereon a data structure comprising:

a first field containing location information identifying locations of a plurality of network servers that provide at least one service via a data communication network, said location information being maintained by the network servers; and

a second field containing keyword information, said keyword information relating the location information to the services provided by the network servers for routing a user upon a request from the user for a selected service to be provided by one of the network servers, said request being received at a central server coupled with the data structure, said central server retrieving the location information from the first field to identify the location of the network server providing the selected service as a function of the keyword information and attaching a carry through keyword to the retrieved location information for routing the user to the selected service based on the keyword information.

40. The data structure of claim 39 further comprising a third field containing authentication information, said authentication information being compared to login information from the user for authenticating the user upon the request for the selected service, said central server routing the user to the selected service based on the keyword information if the user was authenticated.

41. The data structure of claim 39 wherein the keyword information includes at least one carry through keyword.

42. The data structure of claim 39 wherein the keyword information includes at least one service routing request keyword.

42. The data structure of claim 39 wherein the keyword information includes at least one service routing request keyword.